CBSE Class 12 History 2025 — Set 3 — Answer Key

English Medium

Time Allowed: 3 Hours

General Instructions:

1. This is an answer key — each question is shown with its correct answer and a step-by-step explanation.
2. Questions appear in the original paper order.

Q.1

Which of the following statement best explains the uniformity in urban planning across Harappa ?

(a) Presence of Central authority <<
(b) Management by city-states
(c) Organisation of tribal leadership
(d) System of nomadic governance

Explanation:

The uniformity in Harappan urban planning — standardised brick sizes, grid-pattern streets, drainage systems across distant sites — is best explained by the existence of a central authority that enforced common standards across the civilisation.

Q.2

Identify the ancient rulers of India from the given options using the provided information.

• They belonged to important ruling lineage.
• They were the immediate successors of the Mauryas.
• They were Brahmanas.

Options :

(a) Mauryas and Guptas
(b) Nandas and Cholas
(c) Satavahanas and Kushanas
(d) Shungas and Kanvas <<

Explanation:

The Shungas and Kanvas were the immediate successors of the Mauryan empire. Both dynasties were founded by Brahmanas — Pushyamitra Shunga, a Brahmin general, overthrew the last Mauryan ruler, and the Kanva dynasty that followed was also Brahmin in origin.

Q.3

Refer to the given image of the sandstone sculpture. Which one of the following dynasties does this sculpture of the King represent ?

(a) Gupta
(b) Maurya
(c) Kushana <<
(d) Satavahana

Explanation:

The sandstone sculpture depicted represents a Kushana king.
Kushana rulers had distinctive sculptural representations with heavy coats, boots and frontally-posed standing figures — a style influenced by Central Asian traditions, different from the Gupta or Mauryan styles.

Q.4

Two statements labelled as Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are given below. Read them carefully and select the correct option :
Assertion (A) : The Tripitaka written in Pali is one of the primary collections of Buddhist scriptures.
Reason (R) : The Tripitaka consists of three collections, which include the Vinaya Pitaka, the Sutta Pitaka and the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

Options :

(a) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of the Assertion (A). <<
(b) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of the Assertion (A).
(c) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.
(d) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Explanation:

Both A and R are true.

Assertion A (Tripitaka written in Pali is a primary Buddhist scripture collection) is correct.

Reason R (Tripitaka consists of Vinaya Pitaka, Sutta Pitaka and Abhidhamma Pitaka) is also correct.

Crucially, R IS the correct explanation of A — the very reason the Tripitaka is a primary collection is precisely because it contains these three canonical pitakas (the complete canonical corpus of early Buddhism).

The three-pitaka structure IS what defines it as the primary/canonical collection, not merely an incidental fact.

Therefore option (A) — both true, R correctly explains A — is the right answer.

Q.5

Which of the following statements accurately describe Harappan seals ?

I. Harappan seals often feature animal motifs.

II. Harappan seals were made of terracotta with symbols.

III. Harappan seals were known for military victories.

IV. Harappan seals were predominantly used in burials.

Options :

(a) Statements I and II are correct. <<

(b) Statements I and III are correct.

(c) Statements II and III are correct.

(d) Statements III and IV are correct.

Explanation:

Harappan seals typically depicted animal motifs (unicorns, bulls, etc.) and were made of steatite (fired/terracotta-treated) inscribed with symbols.

They were not associated with military victories (III) or predominantly used in burials (IV) — they were primarily used for trade and administrative purposes.

Q.6

Fill in the blank with the appropriate word from the given options :

In Jainism, the practice of severe asceticism and non-attachment is intended

to achieve _____, which is liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

(a) Ahimsa
(b) Karma
(c) Moksha <<
(d) Dharma

Explanation:
In Jainism, Moksha is the ultimate goal — liberation (mukti) from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (samsara).
Severe asceticism and non-attachment (tapas and ahimsa) are the means to achieve it by shedding karmic matter from the soul.

Q.7

Why is Mahabharata called a dynamic text ? Choose the most suitable option from the following.

(a) It remains unchanged and consistent in all versions.
(b) It has been reinterpreted across various contexts. <<
(c) It focuses solely on historical facts.
(d) It is a fixed text with no variations over time.

Explanation:
The Mahabharata is called a dynamic text because it has been continuously reinterpreted, retold and adapted across different languages, regions, time periods and contexts.
Stories and episodes were added over centuries, making it an ever-evolving composition rather than a fixed, static text.

Q.8

Match Column I with Column II and choose the correct option.
Column I (Traveller) — Column II (Country)
a. Al-Biruni — i. Morocco
b. Marco Polo — ii. Uzbekistan

c. Ibn Battuta — iii. Italy

d. Abdur Razzaq — iv. Samarqand

Options :

(a) a-i, b-ii, c-iii, d-iv

(b) a-ii, b-iii, c-i, d-iv <<

(c) a-iii, b-iv, c-i, d-ii

(d) a-iv, b-i, c-ii, d-iii

Explanation:

Al-Biruni was from Uzbekistan (Khwarezm region, modern Uzbekistan);
Marco Polo was from Italy;
Ibn Battuta was from Morocco;
Abdur Razzaq was from Samarqand (modern Uzbekistan, but the match given is Samarqand as iv).
Correct matching: a-ii (Uzbekistan), b-iii (Italy), c-i (Morocco), d-iv (Samarqand) → option (B).

Q.9

Which one of the following pairs is not correctly matched ?

(Sufi) — (Region)

(a) Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi — Ajmer

(b) Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki — Delhi

(c) Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar — Ajodhan (Pakistan)

(d) Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya — Agra <<

Explanation:

Shaikh Nizamuddin Auliya was associated with Delhi (Ghiyaspur, Delhi), not Agra.
The other pairs are correctly matched: Shaikh Muinuddin Sijzi with Ajmer, Khwaja Qutbuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki with Delhi, and Shaikh Fariduddin Ganj-i Shakar with Ajodhan (now in Pakistan).

Q.10

Which of the following was the main source of initial information about Hampi's ruins for Colonel Colin Mackenzie ?

(a) British documents
(b) Memories of priests <<
(c) Foreign travellers account
(d) Epigraphic inscriptions

Explanation:

Colonel Colin Mackenzie's initial information about Hampi's ruins came from the memories of priests (local Brahmin priests associated with the Virupaksha temple) who guided him and narrated local traditions about the site.

He later compiled information from inscriptions and other sources.

Q.11

Which of the following informations were included in the tables of the sarkars in the Ain-i-Akbari ?

I. Grants of revenue in charity
II. Total area measured
III. Number of forts
IV. Biographies of officials

Options :

(a) I, III and IV
(b) I, II and III <<
(c) I, II and IV
(d) II, III and IV

Explanation:

The Ain-i-Akbari's tables of sarkars included: grants of revenue given in charity (I), total area measured (II), and number of forts (III).

Biographies of officials (IV) were not part of the sarkar tables — Abu'l Fazl included biographical details elsewhere in the text.

Q.12

According to Montesquieu, how did the rulers in Asia manage their subjects ? Choose the most appropriate option from the following.

(a) By promoting private property
(b) By ensuring economic equality
(c) By exercising absolute authority <<
(d) By decentralizing powers to leaders

Explanation:

According to Montesquieu in his work 'The Spirit of the Laws', Asian rulers governed by exercising absolute (despotic) authority.
He contrasted this with European governance, arguing that Asia's geography and climate predisposed it to despotism and centralised, arbitrary rule.

Q.13

Imagine reading the 'Nalayira Divyaprabandham' a significant text in Tamil. Why is this collection often referred to as the Tamil Veda ?

(a) It contains laws and regulations of Tamil society.
(b) It holds religious significance equivalent to Vedas. <<
(c) It is documented as a historical epic based on events.
(d) It serves as a manual for temple construction.

Explanation:

The Nalayira Divyaprabandham (4000 divine compositions) by the Alvars is called the Tamil Veda because of its immense religious significance within the Vaishnava tradition — it is considered as spiritually authoritative and sacred as the Sanskrit Vedas for Tamil Vaishnavas.

Q.14

Match the following Column I with Column II and choose the correct option.
Column I (Dynasties of Vijayanagara) — Column II (Contributions)
a. Sangama — i. Strengthened military
b. Saluva — ii. Belonged to Krishnadeva Raya

c. Tuluva — iii. Constructed Hiriya canal

d. Aravidu — iv. Last dynasty of Vijayanagara empire

Options :

(a) a-iii, b-i, c-ii, d-iv <<

(b) a-ii, b-iii, c-i, d-iv

(c) a-iv, b-iii, c-ii, d-i

(d) a-i, b-ii, c-iii, d-iv

Explanation:

Sangama dynasty constructed the Hiriya canal;

Saluva dynasty strengthened the military (Saluva Narasimha revived the empire by military power);

Tuluva dynasty includes Krishnadeva Raya (the greatest Vijayanagara ruler);

Aravidu was the last dynasty of the Vijayanagara empire.

Correct: a-iii, b-i, c-ii, d-iv → option (A).

Q.15

How did David Ricardo's ideas influence British revenue policies in India ?

(a) Adoption of fixed revenue demands for Ryots

(b) Taxing landowners' surplus income based on average rent <<

(c) Widespread implementation of Permanent Settlement

(d) Rejection of revenue in favour of village development

Explanation:

David Ricardo's theory of rent argued that landlords' profit (differential rent) arose from differences in soil fertility above the average, and this surplus should be taxed.

British revenue policies, particularly in the Ryotwari areas, were influenced by this — the state would appropriate the surplus income of landowners above the average rent as land revenue.

Q.16

Who amongst the following wrote the line "Khoob Ladi Mardani, Woh To

Jhansi Wali Rani Thi" ?

(a) Mahadevi Verma

(b) Harivansh Rai Bachchan

(c) Subhadra Kumari Chauhan <<

(d) Ramdhari Singh Dinkar

Explanation:

The famous patriotic poem "Jhansi Ki Rani" containing the line "Khoob ladi mardani, woh to Jhansi wali Rani thi" was written by Subhadra Kumari Chauhan.
It celebrates the bravery of Rani Lakshmibai of Jhansi during the Revolt of 1857.

Q.17

Arrange the following events in chronological order and choose the correct option :

I. Peasant Movement in Kheda

II. Gandhi-Irwin Pact

III. Champaran Movement

IV. Noakhali Visit of Gandhiji

Options :

(a) IV, I, II, III

(b) II, I, III, IV

(c) III, II, IV, I

(d) III, I, II, IV <<

Explanation:

Chronological order: Champaran Movement (III) = 1917; Peasant Movement in Kheda (I) = 1918; Gandhi-Irwin Pact (II) = 1931; Noakhali Visit of Gandhiji (IV) = 1946.
Correct sequence: III, I, II, IV →
option (D).

Q.18

Which of the following pairs of Committees and their Presidents is correct

regarding the Constituent Assembly ?

(Committees) — (Presidents)

(a) Advisory Committee — Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel <<

(b) Flag Committee — N.G. Ranga

(c) Steering Committee — J.B. Kripalani

(d) Supreme Court Committee — Jawaharlal Nehru

Explanation:

In the Constituent Assembly, the Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas was presided over by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

J.B.

Kripalani chaired the Flag Committee; N.G.

Ranga was a member but not the Flag Committee president;

the Supreme Court Committee was chaired by S.

Varadachari/Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar.

Q.19

Who amongst the following women was a member of the Constituent Assembly from Bombay ?

(a) Kamala Nehru

(b) Hansa Mehta <<

(c) Purnima Banerji

(d) Vijayalakshmi Pandit

Explanation:

Hansa Mehta represented Bombay in the Constituent Assembly.

Kamala Nehru had passed away in 1936 before the Assembly was constituted;

Purnima Banerji represented the United Provinces;

Vijayalakshmi Pandit represented United Provinces.

Q.20

Two statements labelled as Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are given below.

Read them carefully and select the correct option :

Assertion (A) : India was considered a suitable country for cotton cultivation due to its soil, climate and cheap labour, by the Britishers.

Reason (R) : The American Civil War (1861 – 65) caused a significant drop in raw cotton imports from America, leading Britain to seek alternative sources.

Options :

(a) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true and Reason (R) is the correct explanation of the Assertion (A). <<

(b) Both Assertion (A) and Reason (R) are true, but Reason (R) is not the correct explanation of the Assertion (A).

(c) Assertion (A) is true, but Reason (R) is false.

(d) Assertion (A) is false, but Reason (R) is true.

Explanation:

Both statements are true and R correctly explains A.

Britain considered India suitable for cotton due to its soil, climate and cheap labour (A is true).

The American Civil War (1861–65) cut off America's cotton exports to Britain, driving Britain to actively promote cotton cultivation in India as an alternative source (R is true and directly explains why A was acted upon).

Q.21

Choose the correct option from the following to fill in the blank regarding the role of leaders in the Revolt of 1857.

Nana Saheb : Kanpur; Kunwar Singh : _____

(a) Gwalior

(b) Meerut

(c) Singhbhum

(d) Arrah <<

Explanation:

Kunwar Singh led the revolt in Arrah (Bihar).

He was the zamindar of Jagdishpur near Arrah and became one of the most prominent leaders of the 1857 revolt in Bihar.

Nana Saheb led the revolt in Kanpur.

Q.22

(a) "Historians consider several elements when they analyse the Mahabharata." Substantiate the statement with suitable examples. (3 marks)

Answer: Historians analyse the Mahabharata considering: (1) The text as a historical source — it reflects social norms, kinship practices, and political ideas of the period (c. 500 BCE–400 CE); e.g., the depiction of polyandry (Draupadi's marriage to five Pandavas) shows practices outside Brahmanical norms. (2) The process of composition — it grew from an initial 10,000 shlokas (Jaya) to 24,000 (Bharata) to 100,000 (Mahabharata), with interpolations over centuries; historians distinguish older warrior-tradition layers from later didactic additions (Shanti Parva). (3) The multiple versions — regional retellings in Tamil, Telugu, Bengali and Southeast Asian languages show how the text was continuously reinterpreted; the Malayalam Mahabharata differs from the Sanskrit critical edition. (4) The tension between the ideal and the real — the Mahabharata negotiates between Kshatriya dharma (battlefield obligation) and wider ethical concerns, a tension historians use to understand evolving values.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Answer should be 60–80 words with concrete examples from the text's composition history and use as a historical source.

OR

Q.22

(b) OR — "Many communities during the Mahabharata period had different social practices from Brahmanical ideas." Substantiate the statement with

examples. (3 marks)

Answer: Several communities had practices diverging from Brahmanical norms as reflected in the Mahabharata: (1) Polyandry — Draupadi's marriage to five Pandava brothers was unusual and debated within the text itself, suggesting it recorded non-Brahmanical practices. (2) Nishadas — forest-dwelling communities (like Ekalavya's Nishada community) had their own social structures outside the varna order. (3) Nagas — the Mahabharata mentions Naga communities with different marriage and kinship norms; e.g., Arjuna's marriage to Ulupi (a Naga princess). (4) Matrilineal practices — some communities traced descent through mothers, contrasting with the Brahmanical patrilineal ideal. These examples show diversity in lived social practices.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer OR variant (3 marks).

Answer should demonstrate social diversity through specific textual examples from the Mahabharata.

Q.23

How does the Sanchi Stupa reflect the religious and cultural beliefs of ancient India ? Explain with examples. (3 marks)

Answer: The Sanchi Stupa (Madhya Pradesh, c. 3rd century BCE–1st century CE) reflects ancient India's religious and cultural beliefs in several ways: (1) Buddhist cosmology — the hemispherical dome (anda) represents the cosmic mountain and the universe; the parasol (chattravali) on top symbolises royalty and reverence for the Buddha. (2) Jataka stories — the sculptural panels on the four toranas (gateways) depict scenes from Jataka tales (previous births of the Buddha), combining religious narrative with artistic expression. (3) Aniconic representation — the Buddha is depicted symbolically (footprints, wheel, empty throne, Bodhi tree) rather than in human form, reflecting early Buddhist practice of not depicting the Buddha directly. (4) Lay patronage — inscriptions record donations by merchants, artisans and women, showing broad social participation

in Buddhist religious culture beyond the monastic order.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Answer should be 60–80 words covering architectural symbolism, sculptural programme and social/religious context.

Q.24

(a) Imagine studying the water management system of the Vijayanagara empire. How did the empire's water resources support its agriculture and urban development ? Explain. (3 marks)

Answer: The Vijayanagara empire developed an extensive water management system to support its arid Deccan setting: (1) Tanks and reservoirs — the Kamalapuram tank (excavated c. 15th century) channelled water into the Royal Centre; the Hiriya canal (built by Sangama dynasty) diverted the Tungabhadra river across the cultivated valley to irrigate fields. (2) Embankments — across natural depressions to collect monsoon runoff, enabling agriculture in rain-shadow zones. (3) Urban water supply — aqueducts and channels distributed water to the capital Vijayanagara (Hampi) for palace complexes and urban use. (4) Agricultural support — irrigated fields of sugarcane, cotton and betel leaf sustained the empire's revenue base and trade. These systems reflected deliberate state investment in hydraulic infrastructure.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Answer should cover irrigation infrastructure (Hiriya canal, tanks), linking them to agricultural and urban functions.

OR

Q.24

(b) OR — Imagine studying Vijayanagara's trade records. What information do they reveal about the goods traded and the empire's economic connections ? Explain. (3 marks)

Answer: Vijayanagara's trade records (travellers' accounts, inscriptions, archaeological finds) reveal a vibrant commercial economy: (1) Goods traded — horses (imported in large numbers from Arabia and Central Asia via Goa for the cavalry), elephants, textiles (cotton and silk), spices, diamonds (Golconda mines nearby), iron, and luxury goods. (2) Foreign merchants — Arab, Persian, Portuguese and Chinese merchants traded at Vijayanagara's ports (Calicut, Mangalore, Bhatkal); the Portuguese traded horses for spices and textiles after 1498. (3) Internal trade — a network of markets (nagaram, pettai) linked the capital to the hinterland; merchant guilds (e.g., Ayyavole 500) facilitated long-distance trade. (4) Revenue — trade taxes funded the imperial treasury. These connections show Vijayanagara as a major node in Indian Ocean trade networks.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer OR variant (3 marks).

Focus on commodities, trading partners, market structure and economic implications.

Q.25

Describe the teachings of Guru Nanak Dev. (3 marks)

Answer: Guru Nanak Dev (1469–1539), founder of Sikhism, taught: (1) Monotheism (Ik Onkar) — God is one, formless, eternal and beyond caste; He is called Sat Guru (True Teacher). (2) Rejection of rituals and idolatry — Guru Nanak rejected empty religious ceremonies, caste distinctions, and pilgrimage as paths to salvation. (3) Nam simran — the path to liberation is through meditation on God's name (naam), honest living (kirat karo) and sharing with others (vand chhako). (4) Universal brotherhood — all human beings are equal regardless of caste, gender or religion; he emphasised the oneness of Hindus and Muslims before God. (5) Langar — the community kitchen (instituted at Kartarpur) embodied equality by having people of all castes eat together. His teachings are recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Cover key doctrines: monotheism, rejection of ritual/caste, naam simran, seva and equality.

Q.26

Analyse the impact of the Ryotwari system on the ryots of Bombay. (3 marks)

Answer: The Ryotwari system (introduced by Elphinstone in Bombay Presidency, 1820s) had significant negative impacts on the ryots: (1) High revenue demands — the system assessed land revenue directly from each ryot based on theoretically estimated productivity, often exceeding actual output; surveys set revenue at 50–55% of gross produce. (2) Indebtedness — when crops failed (drought, 1820s–1840s) ryots could not pay the fixed demand and borrowed from moneylenders (sahukar), entering a cycle of debt; land was mortgaged and sometimes lost. (3) Forced cotton cultivation — from the 1860s (American Civil War), ryots were encouraged to grow cotton for export; when cotton prices collapsed post-1865, ryots were left with debts but no food crops. (4) Deccan Riots (1875) — the cumulative effect was the Deccan Riots, where ryots attacked moneylenders and burned debt bonds, showing the depth of agrarian distress caused by the Ryotwari system.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Analyse revenue assessment, indebtedness, cash-crop pressure and agrarian unrest as linked impacts.

Q.27

Explain the central debates in the Constituent Assembly regarding federalism. (3 marks)

Answer: The Constituent Assembly debated federalism extensively, with two main positions: (1) Strong Centre vs. genuine federation — T.T. Krishnamachari,

Jawaharlal Nehru and B.R. Ambedkar argued for a strong centralised state to handle national emergencies, economic planning and communal tensions; smaller states' representatives wanted more autonomy. (2) Linguistic states — K.M. Munshi and many members debated whether provinces should be reorganised on linguistic lines; this was deferred (States Reorganisation Commission came later in 1956). (3) Residual powers — debates over whether residual legislative powers should rest with the Union or states; the Constitution placed them with the Union (unlike the US/Australian model). (4) Governor's role — debates on whether Governors (appointed by the Centre) would undermine state autonomy. The final Constitution created a 'Union of States' (not a federation per se), with a strong Centre especially in emergencies, reflecting the context of Partition and integration of princely states.

Explanation:

Section B Short Answer (3 marks).

Cover Centre-state balance, residual powers, linguistic reorganisation and emergency provisions as key debate themes.

Q.28

(a) Imagine if you were developing an educational programme on forest life during the Mughal era. What key aspects of the life of forest-dwellers during that time would you explain ? Substantiate. (8 marks)

Answer: Key aspects of forest life during the Mughal era: (1) Identity and communities — forest-dwellers (jangli) were identified by their practice of shifting cultivation, hunting and gathering; major communities included Bhils, Gonds, Ahoms and Koches in different regions. They were not simply primitive but had complex societies. (2) Shifting cultivation (jhum/swidden) — forest communities cleared land by burning, cultivated for 2–3 seasons and moved on, allowing forest regeneration; Mughal administrators viewed this as wasteful and tried to discourage it to expand settled agriculture and revenue. (3) Role in the Mughal economy — forest communities supplied commodities such as elephants (for the

Mughal army), timber, honey, wax, herbs, animal skins and forest produce that fed into the wider Mughal economy through trade and tribute. (4) Elephants — a particularly crucial commodity; the Mughal army required large numbers of war elephants, and forest chiefs who could supply trained elephants were valuable allies. (5) Relationship with the Mughal state — the Mughal state sought to extend its authority into forests but found it difficult; forest communities retained autonomy and sometimes provided refuge to rebels (e.g., Prince Salim/Jahangir's rebellion used forest areas). Chiefs like the Gond raja Sangram Shah built their own kingdoms within forest zones. (6) Social hierarchy within forest communities — not all forest communities were equal; there were chiefs and subordinate communities; the Ahoms of Assam built a sophisticated state with paik (peasant-soldier) system and recorded their history in buranjis (chronicles). (7) Impact of Mughal expansion — as Mughal power expanded, forests shrank; hunting preserves (qamar) were maintained for Mughal rulers, limiting forest access for dwellers; construction needs consumed timber. (8) Concluding point — the Mughal era was a period of tension and accommodation between the sedentary agricultural world and forest communities, with forests being both economically important and strategically significant as refuges.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer (8 marks, 300–350 words).

Cover forest communities' identity, economy, shifting cultivation, Mughal relations, commodities and state expansion's impact.

OR

Q.28

(b) OR — Imagine if you were tasked with researching the contributions of women in Mughal rural society. How would you analyse their roles in agriculture and society ? Explain. (8 marks)

Answer: Women's contributions in Mughal rural society: (1) Agricultural labour — women participated substantially in agricultural work: sowing, weeding, harvesting and processing crops (threshing, winnowing, grinding grain). In many peasant

households the entire family, including women and children, was engaged in farming. (2) Artisanal production — women played a key role in rural craft production: spinning cotton and silk thread, weaving cloth, making pottery and processing oil. The Ain-i-Akbari mentions artisanal households where women's labour was integral. (3) Control over property — in some regions women held property rights; widows could inherit land and some had rights over family property, though Brahmanical texts sought to limit this. (4) Zamindari women — wives and daughters of zamindars (rural magnates) sometimes managed estates during their husbands' absences or widowhood; they conducted negotiations with Mughal officials and managed accounts. (5) Religious and ritual roles — women led local festivals, managed household shrines and conducted rituals connected with agricultural cycles (prayers for rain, harvest festivals), binding the community together. (6) Sources of evidence — women's contributions are largely invisible in official Mughal records (farmans, revenue documents) which focused on male heads of households; evidence comes from the Ain-i-Akbari (mentions women artisans), travellers' accounts, and local chronicles. (7) Purdah and social restrictions — upper-caste/class women faced greater restrictions (purdah, limited mobility) while lower-caste and tribal women had more economic freedom as they needed to work outside the home. (8) Marginalisation in records — despite their economic importance, women were recorded as dependants in land records; their labour was unacknowledged in revenue assessments which assessed male peasants (ryots) only. This analytical gap itself reveals the gender bias in Mughal administrative documentation.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer OR variant (8 marks).

Cover agricultural labour, artisanal work, property rights, source limitations and gendered visibility in records.

Q.29

(a) In what ways do the challenges of inscriptional evidences restrict our

ability to understand the past ? Explain with examples. (8 marks)

Answer: Challenges of inscriptional evidence and their limitations: (1) Selective survival — inscriptions were made on durable materials (stone, copper) but many have been lost, damaged or are yet undiscovered. Organic materials used for everyday records have perished entirely, so only a fraction of past communication survives. Example: of Ashoka's 14 Major Rock Edicts, several versions exist but some sites are known only from fragments. (2) Language and script problems — many inscriptions are in languages (Prakrit, Pali, Sanskrit, Tamil-Brahmi, local languages) and scripts (Kharosthi, Brahmi, Grantha) that required decipherment. Early European scholars, including James Prinsep who deciphered Brahmi in 1838, took decades to read them. Kharosthi (written right to left) remained undeciphered for much longer. (3) Official/elite bias — almost all inscriptions record the perspective of rulers, merchants or religious establishments. They celebrate victories, donations and construction, and rarely document the lives of ordinary people, women, lower castes or the poor. The social history of the majority is largely absent. (4) Formulaic language — inscriptions often use conventional phrases and exaggerated claims (prashastis). Example: Allahabad Pillar Inscription (Samudragupta) lists his conquests in poetic terms; it is difficult to determine actual political geography from such panegyric. (5) Incomplete texts — inscriptions are frequently damaged, worn, or missing sections; gaps can lead to misreadings. Example: the interpretation of Mauryan Brahmi edicts was disputed by scholars for decades. (6) Absence of dates — many inscriptions lack clear dating; relative chronology must be established through palaeography (letterform analysis), stratigraphy and cross-referencing with coins or literary sources, all of which have their own uncertainties. (7) Subjectivity of interpretation — the same inscription can be interpreted differently. The Nanaghat inscription mentioning satavahana rulers has been read as evidence of both Brahmanical patronage and non-Brahmanical practices by different historians. (8) Language of propaganda — royal inscriptions present the ruler's intended image. Ashoka's edicts describe his personal transformation after Kalinga, but historians cannot independently verify

the emotional content; the political purpose of projecting a benevolent image must be considered.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer (8 marks).

Cover survival, decipherment challenges, elite bias, formulaic language, dating problems and interpretive subjectivity with examples.

OR

Q.29

(b) OR — In what ways do coins serve as valuable sources for understanding the ancient period ? Explain with examples. (8 marks)

Answer: Coins as historical sources for the ancient period: (1) Political history — coins carry rulers' names, titles and portraits, providing direct evidence of dynasties, their geographical extent and succession. Example: gold coins of Samudragupta (shown performing Ashvamedha) confirm his rule and imperial ambitions; coins of Indo-Greek kings (like Menander/Milinda) provide the only evidence for many of these rulers unknown from Indian texts. (2) Chronology — coins help establish dates; they can be linked to datable archaeological layers (stratigraphy). The presence of Roman coins at South Indian sites (Puhar, Arikamedu) confirms Roman trade contacts in the 1st–2nd centuries CE. (3) Economic history — the metallurgy of coins (gold, silver, copper, lead) indicates economic conditions; debasement of coinage (reducing gold/silver content) signals fiscal stress. The decline in punch-marked silver coinage in post-Maurya period and rise of lead coins of Satavahanas reflects regional economic shifts. (4) Trade and exchange — coins found far from their place of minting indicate trade routes and commercial networks. Roman gold coins in Tamil Nadu confirm the literary evidence of Indo-Roman trade mentioned in Sangam poetry and the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea. (5) Religion and ideology — coin iconography reveals religious beliefs. Kushan king Kanishka's coins show both Indian deities (Shiva, Buddha) and Iranian gods (Mithra, Nana), reflecting religious syncretism of the Kushan empire. (6) Languages and scripts — bilingual coins (Greek and

Kharosthi on Indo-Greek coins) were used by James Prinsep to decipher the Kharosthi script, unlocking north-western inscriptions. (7) Everyday life — small copper coins give evidence of local, everyday market transactions that gold and silver coinage does not reflect. (8) Limitations — coins too have biases: they show official images; forgeries exist; context of hoards may be ambiguous. Nevertheless, combined with inscriptions and texts, coins are among the most objective and precisely dateable archaeological sources.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer OR variant (8 marks).

Cover political identification, chronology, economic indicators, trade evidence, religious iconography and script decipherment with examples.

Q.30

(a) Explain the major events and movements that defined India's political condition between 1919 and 1922. (8 marks)

Answer: India's political condition 1919–1922 was shaped by escalating nationalist confrontation with British rule: (1) Rowlatt Act (March 1919) — the British enacted this law allowing imprisonment without trial to suppress 'sedition', outraging Indian opinion across the political spectrum. Gandhi called for a hartal (strike). (2) Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (13 April 1919, Amritsar) — General Dyer ordered troops to fire on a peaceful crowd (celebrating Baisakhi, protesting the arrest of Satyapal and Kitchlew); approximately 400 people were killed and over 1,000 wounded. This single event radicalised Indian nationalism more than any other. (3) Khilafat Movement (1919–1922) — Muslims were angered by the harsh treatment of the Ottoman Caliph in the post-World War I peace settlement; the Ali Brothers (Mohammad Ali, Shaukat Ali) led the Khilafat Movement; Gandhi allied with it to build Hindu-Muslim unity. (4) Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–1922) — Gandhi launched this unprecedented mass movement calling for boycott of British institutions: schools, colleges, law courts, legislatures and foreign cloth. Indians surrendered titles and honours; lawyers gave up practice; students left

government schools. (5) Spread of the movement — the Non-Cooperation Movement reached peasants in Awadh (led by Baba Ramchandra), tribals in Andhra (Alluri Sitaram Raju) and workers in Assam tea gardens; it became a genuinely mass movement. (6) Chauri Chaura (February 1922) — a mob of protesters attacked and burned a police station at Chauri Chaura (UP), killing 22 policemen. Gandhi, horrified by this violence, abruptly withdrew the Non-Cooperation Movement. (7) Impact — the withdrawal shocked many nationalists (including Subhas Chandra Bose and Motilal Nehru) but Gandhi argued that the people were not yet ready for non-violent mass struggle. (8) Overall significance — this period transformed the Indian National Congress from an elite debating society into a mass organisation and made Gandhi the undisputed national leader.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer (8 marks).

Cover Rowlatt Act, Jallianwala Bagh, Khilafat, Non-Cooperation Movement, mass spread and Chauri Chaura withdrawal.

OR

Q.30

(b) OR — Explain the significance of the Dandi March and its influence on the Independence movement. (8 marks)

Answer: The Dandi March (12 March – 5 April 1930) was a defining moment of India's Independence movement: (1) Context — the Indian National Congress at Lahore (December 1929) declared Purna Swaraj (complete independence); Gandhi was tasked with launching a civil disobedience movement. He chose salt as the focus because the Salt Tax affected every Indian, particularly the poor. (2) The march — Gandhi and 78 chosen volunteers marched 385 km from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi (Gujarat coast) over 24 days, attracting growing crowds and international press attention. On 6 April 1930 Gandhi picked up a lump of salt, symbolically breaking the salt law. (3) Mass participation — the march triggered nationwide civil disobedience: illegal salt was made across India; forests laws

were broken; foreign cloth boycotted; women participated in large numbers (pickets outside liquor and cloth shops), marking a new phase of women's political engagement. (4) International significance — the march attracted worldwide attention (covered by international press, including the New York Times); it exposed the moral bankruptcy of British rule and built global sympathy for Indian independence. (5) Government response — the British arrested Gandhi and over 80,000 people; the Peshawar incident (Garhwali soldiers refused to fire on peaceful protesters) showed the limits of British coercive power. (6) Gandhi-Irwin Pact (1931) — British Viceroy Irwin negotiated with Gandhi; civil disobedience was called off; political prisoners released; Indians allowed to make salt for personal use. This showed the British were willing to negotiate. (7) Long-term influence — the Dandi March demonstrated the power of non-violent mass action; it gave ordinary Indians a role in the freedom struggle; it internationalised the independence question; and it made Gandhi a global icon of peaceful resistance. (8) Limitation — the salt satyagraha did not immediately achieve independence, and the subsequent suspension of civil disobedience disappointed many nationalists. Yet it permanently changed the character of the Indian freedom movement.

Explanation:

Section C Long Answer OR variant (8 marks).

Cover context, the march itself, mass participation, international impact, Gandhi-Irwin Pact and long-term significance.

Q.0

Read the given source (Archaeogenetic Research) and answer : (31.1) How does the research at Rakhigarhi contribute to understanding of ancient civilizations ? (1 mark)

Answer: The research at Rakhigarhi contributes by providing DNA evidence that the Harappans were indigenous to South Asia, with genetic roots going back to 10,000 BCE. It overturns earlier migration theories and demonstrates 5,000 years

of unbroken genetic and cultural continuity in the region, enriching our understanding of one of the world's earliest urban civilisations.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).

The answer must be drawn from the passage: indigenous origin, long genetic roots, continuity findings.

Q.0

Read the given source (Archaeogenetic Research) and answer : (31.2) How does the research redefine our understanding of genetic history in South Asia ? (1 mark)

Answer: The research redefines our understanding by ruling out large-scale immigration of the so-called Aryans, as there is unbroken continuity in both genetic and cultural history. The majority of the South Asian population appears to be descended from the Harappans, and gene mixing was minimal — limited to small quantities through trade and cultural contacts.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).

Key point: no large-scale Aryan immigration, continuity of Harappan DNA in present-day South Asian population.

Q.0

Read the given source (Archaeogenetic Research) and answer : (31.3) What is the significance of extracting and analyzing DNA from the remains at Rakhigarhi ? (2 marks)

Answer: The significance of DNA extraction and analysis at Rakhigarhi is: (1) It provides direct biological evidence about the Harappan people — their origins, population movements and genetic relationships with modern populations, going beyond inferences from pottery, seals and other material culture. (2) It confirms that Harappans were indigenous to the region with roots back to 10,000 BCE,

challenging earlier Aryan invasion/migration theories. (3) The 3D facial reconstructions from the DNA data show remarkable similarity to modern Haryana population, demonstrating 5,000 years of continuity. (4) It helps understand inter-regional contacts: minimal gene mixing shows trade connections with distant regions without large-scale population replacement.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (2 marks).

Cover biological evidence, disproving migration theories, continuity demonstration and what DNA analysis adds beyond conventional archaeology.

Q.0

Read the given source (A language with an enormous range — Al-Biruni on Sanskrit) and answer : (32.1) How did Al-Biruni's description of Sanskrit reflect his engagement with Indian culture ? (1 mark)

Answer: Al-Biruni's detailed and analytical description of Sanskrit reflects deep engagement with Indian culture — he learned Sanskrit to read Indian texts directly and understood its grammatical complexity. His comparison of Sanskrit's range to Arabic shows he approached Indian knowledge systems seriously, trying to bridge the two intellectual traditions rather than dismissing Sanskrit as incomprehensible.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).

Key point: Al-Biruni learned Sanskrit, engaged seriously with Indian knowledge, used Arabic as a comparison frame.

Q.0

Read the given source (A language with an enormous range — Al-Biruni on Sanskrit) and answer : (32.2) What key similarity between Sanskrit and Arabic did Al-Biruni highlight ? (1 mark)

Answer: Al-Biruni highlighted that both Sanskrit and Arabic have an enormous range — one and the same thing is called by various names (both original and

derivative), and one and the same word is used for a variety of subjects that must be distinguished from each other by qualifying epithets. Both languages have rich vocabulary and extensive inflections.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).

Direct textual answer: polysemy (one word, many meanings) and synonymy (many words, one thing) common to both languages.

Q.0

Read the given source (A language with an enormous range — Al-Biruni on Sanskrit) and answer : (32.3) Why did Al-Biruni consider Sanskrit a rich language ? (2 marks)

Answer: Al-Biruni considered Sanskrit a rich language because: (1) It has an enormous range in both words and inflections — a single concept can be expressed by many synonyms (original and derivative forms), giving the language great expressive depth. (2) A single word can carry multiple meanings for different subjects, requiring qualifying epithets to distinguish them, indicating a sophisticated and layered semantic structure. (3) Implicitly, Al-Biruni recognised that Sanskrit was the vehicle for vast scientific, philosophical and religious knowledge — he translated Sanskrit texts on mathematics, astronomy and philosophy into Arabic, showing he valued it as a repository of knowledge.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (2 marks).

Cover the textual evidence (range in words and inflections, polysemy, synonymy) and the implied valuation of Sanskrit as a knowledge repository.

Q.0

Read the given source (Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah) and answer : (33.1) Why was Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah called 'Danka Shah' ? (1 mark)

Answer: Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah was called 'Danka Shah' because he moved

from village to village in a palanquin with drumbeaters (danka = drum) marching in front and his followers at the rear. The drum (danka) that accompanied his processions became his identifying symbol, and people popularly called him 'Danka Shah' — the maulvi with the drum.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).
Direct textual answer: danka means drum;
he travelled with drumbeaters in front, hence the popular name.

Q.0

Read the given source (Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah) and answer : (33.2) How did British officials react to Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah's growing influence ? (1 mark)

Answer: British officials panicked at his growing influence: when he reached Lucknow in 1856, police stopped him from preaching in the city. In 1857, he was jailed in Faizabad. They were alarmed because thousands were following him, many Muslims saw him as an inspired prophet, and his message of jehad against the British posed a direct threat to colonial authority.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (1 mark).
Key points: prevention from preaching in Lucknow (1856), imprisonment in Faizabad (1857), officials' panic at mass following.

Q.0

Read the given source (Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah) and answer : (33.3) To what extent did Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah's action reflect the resistance against British rule in India ? (2 marks)

Answer: Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah's actions significantly reflected and shaped resistance against British rule: (1) Pre-revolt mobilisation — from 1856 he preached jehad against the British and moved village to village urging rebellion,

demonstrating organised, ideologically-motivated resistance well before the 1857 revolt formally began. (2) Mass mobilisation — thousands joined him across communities; his authority rested on popular belief in his invincibility and divine inspiration, showing the revolt drew on deep popular sentiment, not merely sepoy grievances. (3) Military leadership — after being freed from Faizabad jail, he was elected leader by the mutinous 22nd Native Infantry and led them at the Battle of Chinhat where the British forces under Henry Lawrence were defeated — a significant military success against colonial power. (4) Limits — his resistance was ultimately suppressed; he was later killed (1858), and the belief in his invincibility was shattered. His story shows both the strength and the limitations of religiously-framed resistance: while it mobilised large numbers, the British eventually prevailed through superior military force and political reorganisation.

Explanation:

Source-based sub-question (2 marks).

Cover pre-revolt mobilisation, mass following, military action at Chinhat, and balanced assessment of extent and limits of his resistance.

Q.0

On the given political outline map of India (page 27), locate and label the following with appropriate symbols : (i) Sanchi — A Stupa; (ii) Kalibanga — Harappan site; (iii)(a) Panipat — Territory under the control of British OR (iii)(b) Vijayanagara — Capital of Vijayanagara empire. (3 marks)

Answer: Locations to mark on the map: (i) Sanchi — in Madhya Pradesh (near Bhopal, MP); mark with a stupa symbol. (ii) Kalibanga — in Rajasthan (Hanumangarh district, on the Ghaggar river); mark with a Harappan site symbol (usually a triangle or dot). (iii)(a) Panipat — in Haryana (north of Delhi); mark as British-controlled territory. OR (iii)(b) Vijayanagara — near Hampi, Karnataka (on the Tungabhadra river); mark as the capital of the Vijayanagara empire with a star symbol.

Explanation:

Section E Map-based question (3 marks, 1 mark each).

Locations: Sanchi = Madhya Pradesh;

Kalibanga = Rajasthan (Hanumangarh, Ghaggar);

Panipat = Haryana;

Vijayanagara/Hampi = Karnataka.

Q.0

On the same political outline map of India, two places have been marked as 'A' and 'B', as the centres of the Revolt of 1857. Identify them and write their correct names on the lines drawn near them. (2 marks)

Answer: Based on the actual map positions on page 27: 'A' is marked with an arrow in the northwestern UP/Haryana region, consistent with Meerut (where the 1857 revolt began on 10 May 1857). 'B' is marked in the far eastern region at approximately the West Bengal/Jharkhand/Bangladesh junction area, consistent with Barrackpore (Barakpur, near Kolkata) where Mangal Pandey's revolt occurred in February 1857. Answer: A = Meerut, B = Barrackpore.

Explanation:

The map on page 27 shows two marked points.

'A' has an arrow pointing to a dot in the northwest — in the Punjab/UP border area, which is Meerut (Uttar Pradesh), where sepoys of the 3rd Cavalry revolted on 10 May 1857, the formal start of the revolt.

'B' is marked in the far eastern region near the Bengal/Jharkhand border area, which corresponds to Barrackpore (now Barakpur, West Bengal) — the site of Mangal Pandey's mutiny in February 1857 that presaged the larger revolt.

The previous answer hedged as 'Meerut / Jhansi OR Kanpur OR Lucknow' — the map positions now allow specific identification: A = Meerut, B = Barrackpore.